



Community Environmental Health Assessments and Special Projects 2004 - 2006

An Update to the Montana EPHT Advisory Group

by

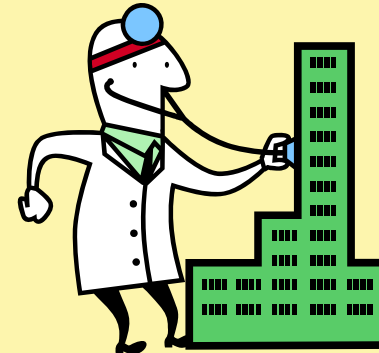
Chris Deveny

January 26, 2006



Community Environmental Health Assessment Contractors

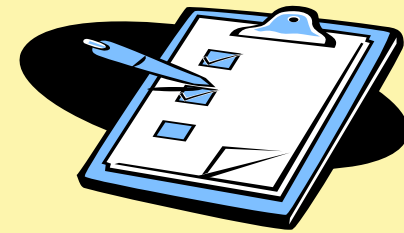
1. Butte-Silver Bow County
2. Cascade County
3. Crow Tribal Health
4. Dawson County
5. Flathead County
6. Fort Peck Tribal Health
7. Glacier County
8. Hill County
9. Lewis & Clark County
10. Ravalli County
11. Yellowstone County
- 12. Missoula County**
- 13. Rocky Boy Tribal Health**





Contractor Activities Summary - Review

- ✓ Established community team and/or advisory group
- ✓ Involved/informed decision makers (Dept. managers, Boards of Health)
- ✓ Obtained community input
 - Surveys, Questionnaires
 - Community Forums/Discussions
 - Focus Groups
 - Outreach at Events
 - Other





Contractor Activities (cont.)

- ✓ Analyzed data & generated a ranked list of EH concerns
- ✓ Prioritized EH concerns for local action
- ✓ Set some action steps
- ✓ Described assessment results and process in a final report





Missoula County Environmental Health Assessment Synopsis October 2005

- Total County Population: **95,802 (2002 Census)**
- Largest Community: **Missoula**
- Lead Agency: **Missoula City-County Health Department**
- Advisory Group: **Environmental Health Advisory Committee**



Missoula County Key Assessment Tools:

- The UM Bureau of Business and Economic Research administered a random-digit dial phone survey to county residents.
- Completed 516 phone interviews
- Obtained deeper understanding of citizen concerns identified through the survey through:
 - 15 key informant interviews
 - two facilitated group discussions
 - five focus group meetings





Top 7 EH Topics of Concern From 516 Surveys – Missoula County

- 1. Outdoor Air Quality – from vehicle emissions**
- 2. Pollutants from Milltown Dam - if not cleaned up**
- 3. Pollutants from Milltown Dam - from clean up activities**
- 4. Outdoor Air Quality – from industry**
- 5. Surface Water – safe from pollution for recreation**
- 6. Neighborhood design affects on mental health**
- 7. Increased likelihood of respiratory diseases like asthma**



Top 4 EH Priorities Recommended by the EHAC – Missoula County

1. **Vehicle (Transportation) Emissions (Ranked # 1 in survey)**

2. **Indoor Environment (7)**

3. **Food Safety and Nutrition**

4. **Neighborhood (Community Design) (6)**



Note: Drinking Water Quality and Surface Water Quality are priority issues that are, and will continue to be, addressed by Missoula's Water Quality District. (2, 3, 5)



Some Recommended Action Steps – Missoula County

- 1. Refer vehicle emissions item to the Air Quality Advisory Council for in-depth discussion.**
- 2. Work with other partners and planners in a variety of ways to reduce vehicle miles.**
- 3. Implement an indoor air education campaign focusing on all possible contaminants (radon, mold, tobacco smoke, asbestos, and other chemicals found in homes or workplaces).**
- 4. Partner with other groups working on food issues to promote healthy eating.**



Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation Environmental Health Assessment Synopsis - October 2005

- Reservation Population: **2,676 (2000 Census)**
3,461 (2005 Chippewa-Cree Tribes Est.)
- Largest Community: **Box Elder**
- Lead Agency: **Rocky Boy Environmental Health Department**
- Advisory Groups:
 - **Community Environmental Health Assessment Team**
 - **The Environmental Working Group**



Rocky Boy's Key Assessment Tools:

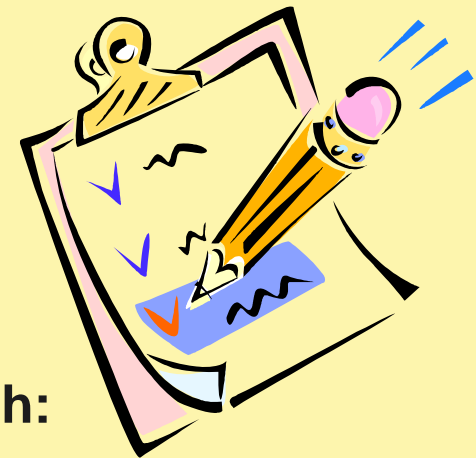
- **Written surveys actively administered to citizens throughout the reservation:**

Door to Door
Stonechild College
High Schools

Senior Citizens Center
Social Services Agency
Tribal Departments

- **401 surveys completed**
- **Obtained deeper understanding of citizen concerns identified through the survey through:**

One facilitated group discussion
Two focus group meetings





Top 7 EH Topics of Concern From 401 Surveys – Rocky Boy

1. Drinking Water Pollution
2. Water Quality from Community Distribution System
3. Surface Water or Groundwater Pollution
4. Community Decay
5. Environmental Justice
6. Environmental Impacts from Methamphetamine Labs
7. Groundwater pollution (drain fields)
8. Pests (rodents, mosquitoes)
9. Heating and Plumbing
10. Food Safety and Cleanliness





Top 7 EH Priorities Recommended by the Rocky Boy Health Board

1. Water Pollution (drinking water, storm water, sanitary sewer, etc.) (Ranked #1,2,3, & 7 in survey)
2. Community Decay (4)
3. Heating and Plumbing (9)
4. Environmental Impacts from Meth Labs (6)
5. Pests (rodents, mosquitoes) (8)
6. Food Safety and Cleanliness (10)
7. Environmental Justice (5)





Some Recommended Action Steps – Rocky Boy's Reservation

- 1. Fund an educator position to manage the recommended environmental health priorities and develop agency response protocol.**
- 2. Provide community education about all aspects of the community water system.**
- 3. Publish/distribute a newsletter to update citizens about environmental issues.**
- 4. Develop a sampling and analysis plan, and a source water protection plan for vulnerable private wells. Identify and map locations of abandoned wells.**
- 5. Establish a system for removal, storage, and disposal of car bodies from waterways.**
- 6. Identify resources for a pilot project to remove abandoned mobile homes.**

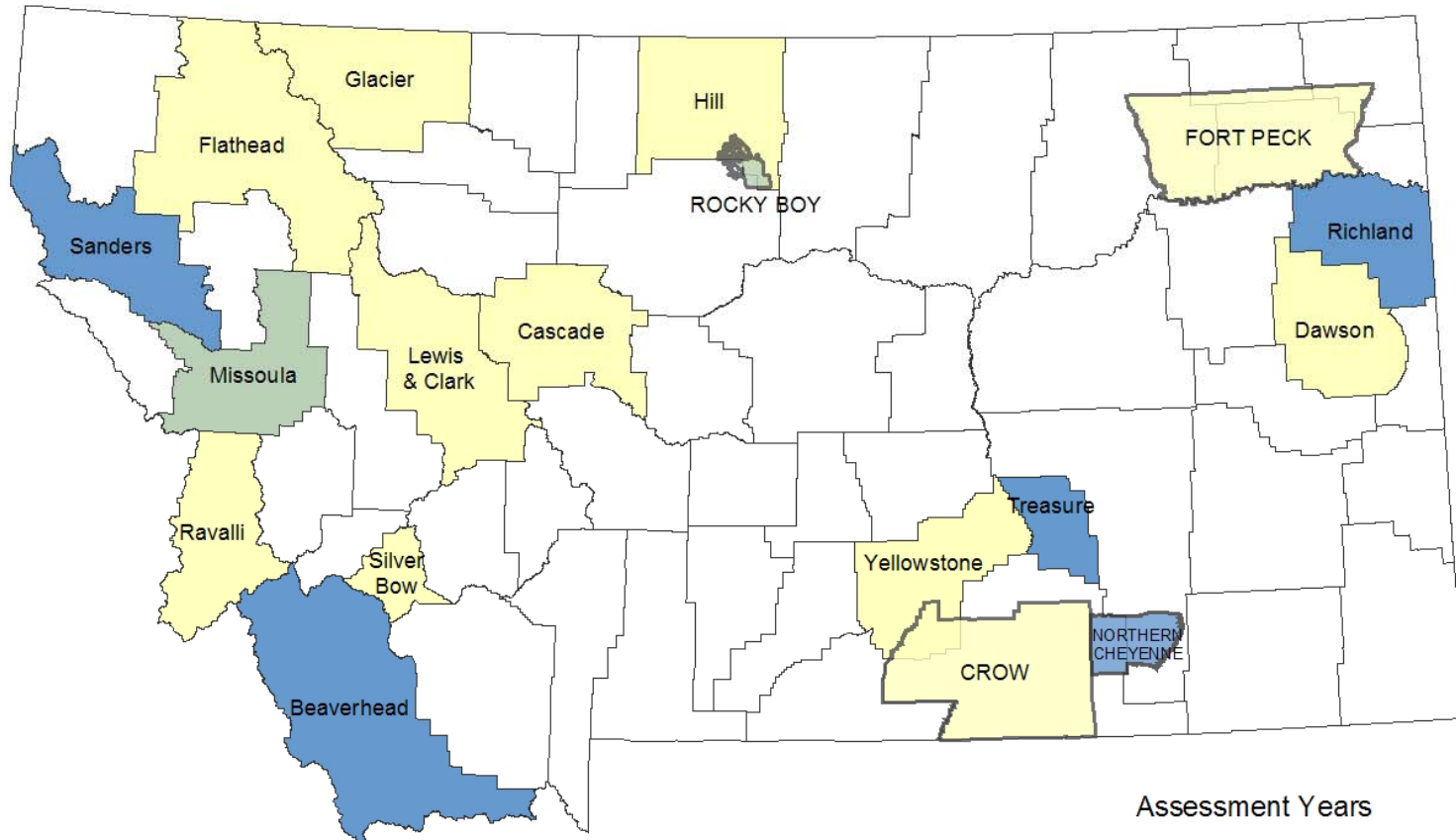


New County/Tribal EH Assessment Sites for 2006

- Beaverhead County (Dillon)
- Northern Cheyenne Reservation (Lame Deer)
- Richland County (Sidney)
- Sanders County (Thompson Falls)
- Treasure County (Hysham)



Montana County and Tribal Environmental Health Assessment Sites



Assessment Years

- 2003-2004
- 2004-2005
- 2005-2006





Community EH Assessment Contractors

- 14 out of 56 Counties (25%)
- 4 out of 7 American Indian Reservations
 - 66% of Montana's Total Population
 - 59% of Montana's American Indian Population



2005 Special Projects

Purpose:

Provide resources and support to contractors to implement a local action step that addressed a priority concern identified through their EH Assessment. \$5000 max/project.

Dawson County Health Department
Hill County Health Department
Yellowstone County Health Department





Dawson County Special Project

EH Assessment Priority Concern Addressed: Water Quality



Action Step Selected: Offer water well testing for private wells, and provide public education about water quality threats, well testing and disinfection.

- Provided free testing (bacteria, sodium, fluoride and nitrates) for 56 wells.
- Coordinated sample collection, analyses and follow-up, mapped data.
- Provided education on well safety, and the need for periodic sampling.
- The mapped data will be used for future water quality project planning.
- Collaborated with: MBMG Groundwater Information Center; DEQ; NRIS; MSU Extension



Hill County Special Project

EH Assessment Priority Concerns Addressed: Drug Abuse and Meth Labs; Drinking Water Quality; Safe Places for Children; Indoor Air Quality

Action Step Selected: Continue efforts of the Hill County Community Environmental Health Assessment (CEHA) Team to address concerns.

- CEHA Team met regularly and expanded their membership.
- Obtained training to have local expertise for mapping public and EH data.
- Sponsored a public presentation to discuss county cancer rates.
- Participated in a public forum on methamphetamine use.
- Initiated well sampling/water quality education for private well owners.
- Initiated projects to determine EH risks in schools and day care facilities.
- Collaborated with the Hill County Health Consortium – many local groups





Yellowstone County Special Project (1)

EH Assessment Priority Concern Addressed: Food Safety



Action Step Selected to Address Concern: Create a Yellowstone County Food Safety Advisory Group to identify/address food safety related concerns.

- Formed a Food Safety Advisory Group with 17 representatives from local businesses, consumer groups, and agencies.
- Chose food safety education as focus.
- Conducted educational campaign at the Montana Fair.
- Promoted National Food Safety Education Month among Group members.
- Group is continuing, and is helping improve communication and rapport among regulators, regulated businesses, and consumers.



Yellowstone County Special Project (2)

EH Assessment Priority Concern Addressed: Food Safety

Action Step Selected to Address Concern: Develop a food-borne illness surveillance system and database.



- Used FDA's National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards as a model, and modified their record keeping system/database to improve the county's foodborne illness surveillance system.
- Ensured data collection uniformity between local environmental health and preventive health services staff.
- Developed procedures to ensure regular data review to identify trends and contributing factors causing foodborne illness or injury.
- Made a link with the county's communicable disease reporting program, which improved communication among county programs.



Benefits of the Special Projects

- Some local environmental health concerns identified through the Community Environmental Health Assessments are being addressed.
- Local projects are continuing after funding ends.
- Citizens see their health department working proactively.
- Public knowledge/awareness of EH issues increases.
- Local staffs are gaining technical skills, and building their capacity to work positively at the community level.
- Health departments are working with new community and agency partners.
- Health departments are improving communication among local agencies and programs about environmental health issues.





New Special Project Contractors (2006)

- **Cascade County:** Nitrate Characterization of the Missouri River Corridor (Cascade to Sun River)
- **Chippewa-Cree Tribe (Rocky Boy):** Private/Abandoned Well Vulnerability Assessment
- **Missoula County:** Healthy Indoor Environment Campaign
- **Ravalli County:** Public Education for Establishing a Local Water Quality District



Montana County and Tribal Environmental Health Assessment Sites & Special Project Sites

